



CASE STUDY:

Ricoh flatbed and large format printers help retailer remain operational throughout the pandemic

next

Floor graphics and signage, produced on Ricoh Pro T7210 UV flatbed and Pro L5160 large format latex printers, ensure the safety of customers and staff in-store.

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## LEADING UK RETAILER

NEXT plc is a leading clothing, footwear and products retailer. The multinational company operates around 500 stores in the UK and Eire, and another 185 in other territories. NEXT has a powerful online presence, but with nearly half of its online orders collected in-store, its retail outlets play an important role in supporting customers.

NEXT stores are beautifully styled retail environments in which carefully curated product lines are supported with discreet lighting and vibrant, on point promotional graphics. Although the company has its own reprographics department, it had relied upon external suppliers to produce point-of-purchase displays and window graphics.

In March 2020, as part of an effort to reduce its reliance on external printers and improve agility by bringing work in-house, a Ricoh Pro T7210 UV flatbed printer and a Ricoh Pro L5160 latex printer were installed in NEXT's Leicestershire-based reprographics department.



## ENHANCED PRINT CAPABILITIES

The retailer had been running an EFI H1625 LED wide-format hybrid production printer (also supplied by Ricoh) in its print room and was using a Ricoh Ri 100 Direct to Garment printer to proof new clothing lines. The Pro T7210 UV flatbed printer and Pro L5160 latex printer were brought in to further expand the retailer's in-house print capabilities.

"We first discussed investing in new print equipment in December 2019, and having seen and considered a number of machines, we opted for Ricoh technology," says NEXT Retail's reprographics controller, Robert Foote. "As soon as the printers were installed, they were put to work on our more traditional in-store graphics print jobs."

However, the retailer was soon hit with the news that its physical stores needed to close in order to limit the spread of Covid-19. Whilst closure brought a temporary halt to the production of display material, it presented a new print challenge that would play a key role in NEXT's ability to continue providing online delivery services.



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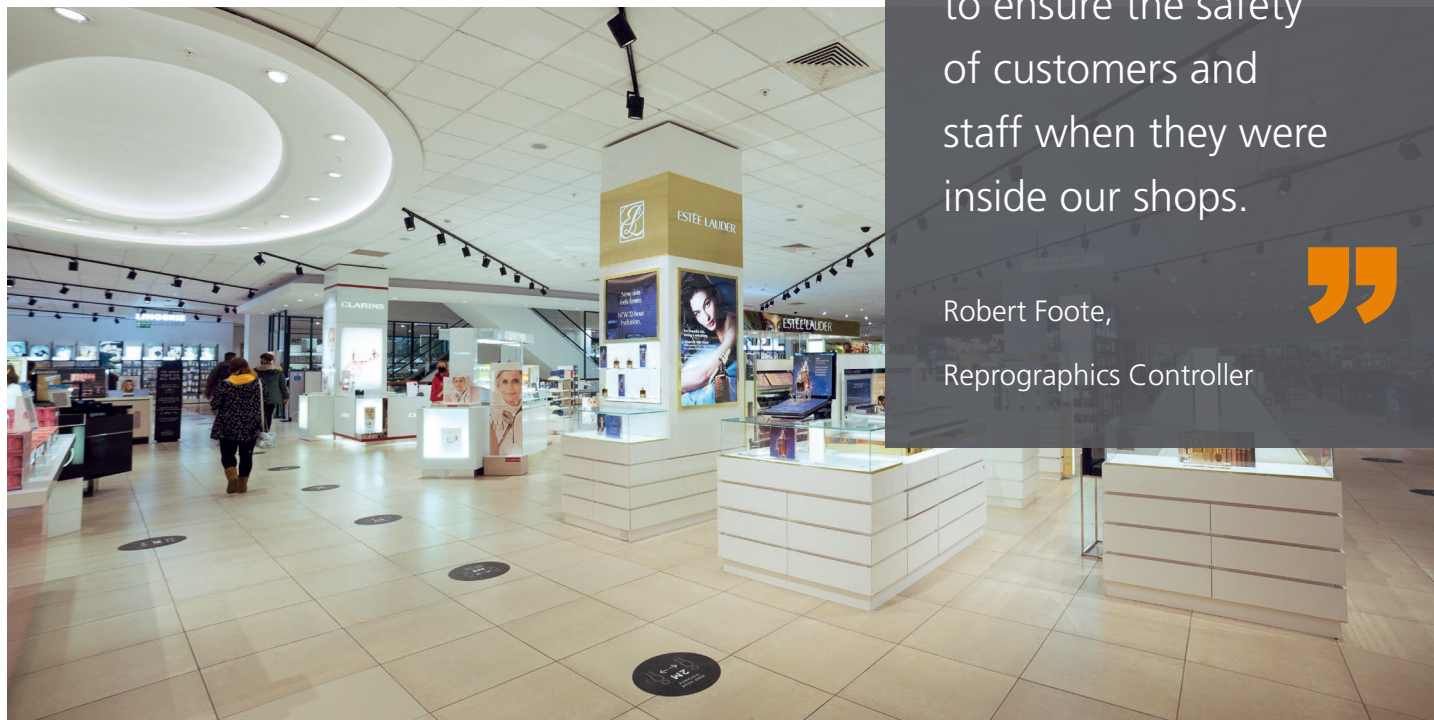


Robert Foote,  
Reprographics Controller



Thanks to the Ricoh printers, we were able to ensure the safety of customers and staff when they were inside our shops.

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## URGENT BUSINESS REQUIREMENT

To maintain online delivery services, NEXT had to ensure that its warehouses and distribution centres operated in accordance with the UK government's Covid-19 regulations. Amongst other measures, this meant installing floor graphics that would help to enforce social distancing and guide staff around one-way systems.

"In the lead up to the first lockdown, I noticed that many supermarkets had begun to install floor graphics, so I decided to get ahead of the game and purchase a lot of vinyl," Foote said. "This meant that when we were asked to create floor graphics for our own warehouses, the Ricoh machines were able to produce this work."

According to Foote, the Ricoh machines were able to step up to the task almost immediately. Printing directly onto self-adhesive vinyl film, the Ricoh flatbed printers produced thousands of floor graphics in just a matter of days. The rapid response helped to minimise disruption to NEXT's online delivery services.

"This was crucial as many external print companies had shut up shop when the lockdown came into effect and were unable to support us. Thanks to our new Ricoh machines, we were able to produce the graphics we needed and keep our online service running for customers across the UK and Ireland."

# AGILE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

When UK lockdown rules were relaxed in the summer of 2020, attention quickly turned to ensuring that NEXT's physical stores could reopen safely. Once again, the Ricoh printers played a vital role, producing floor graphics, social distancing signs and information boards for the retailer's 500 outlets.

"Thanks to the Ricoh printers, we were able to help ensure the safety of customers and staff when they were inside our shops, as well as guarantee that our shops were operating in line with the strict Covid-19 regulations," Foote said.

With the UK now in its third lockdown, Foote reflects on working with Ricoh throughout what has been a very difficult year. Foote said that while Next did have to contend with some logistical teething problems early on in the process, the retailer has been working closely with Ricoh to ensure it is getting the best from the machines.

"The relationship with Ricoh has been great. Moving forwards, we will continue to work in partnership to maximise the quality and variety of output we create with the Ricoh printers."



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## ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 80 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2020, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 19.06 billion USD.

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